



AMC Press Release

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As the World Trades: Arizona's Place in the Global Economy
Leaders meet to discuss Arizona's role in global marketplace
Arizona-Mexico Commission holds global economy forum in Phoenix

PHOENIX — More than 150 leaders from Arizona's transportation, trade and commerce industries came together with international entities last week to discuss Arizona's stake in the global marketplace and the changes that must come to encourage international trade in the state.

The Arizona-Mexico Commission, in partnership with the Transportation and Trade Corridor Alliance (TTCA)– a formed partnership with the Arizona Department of Transportation, the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Arizona Commerce Authority – hosted a global trade forum on Tuesday, February 19, 2013 in downtown Phoenix. The "As the World Trades: Arizona's Place in the Global Economy" event brought together leaders from the state's transportation and trade industries, along with a visit from Governor Jan Brewer, who stressed the importance of securing Arizona's role in a global economy.

"I tasked the Alliance with developing a roadmap that would guide Arizona's development of trade and transportation corridors for the next generation," said Governor Brewer. "Even more simply, this effort is about two words: jobs and the economy. The stakes have never been higher. With growing global and regional competition and a fully interconnected world, we must be proactive or we will simply watch the world pass us by."

The interactive forum was moderated by Todd Sanders, President & CEO of the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce and offered insights from the following panelists: Jim Kolbe, former US Congressman; John Halikowski, Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation; Gene Seroka, President of the Americas for APL Limited; Sandra Watson, President & CEO of the Arizona Commerce Authority; and Bruce Wright, Associate Vice-President for University Research Parks at the University of Arizona. The forum focused primarily on the trade relationship with Mexico – Arizona's neighbor to the south and the 14th largest economy in the world – and provided discussion and dialogue about the importance of being able to expand the throughput of trade across our ports of entry in order to remain competitive with other markets.

Last year, Arizona exported \$18 billion in goods – over \$6 billion to Mexico alone – and touted more than 500,000 businesses statewide. But for trade and the economy to grow, so must the state's transportation infrastructure that carries people, goods and services. TTCA Co-Chair and ADOT Director John Halikowski acknowledged the infrastructure investment that must be made now to carry our state forward – an investment amid funding challenges and an 18-cent gas tax that has not been increased since 1992.

"If I had one wish, it would be to get the public to understand that transportation infrastructure investment is a wise use of our money," said Halikowski. "We need to collaborate to solve the funding problem. Arizona is positioned to be a major transportation hub with its proximity to Mexico, Texas and California. We must invest in our state now while continuing to pursue

transportation and trade corridors through projects like Interstate 11, intercity passenger rail, the North/South Freeway and the Border Master Plan.”

Former Arizona Congressman Jim Kolbe, who is a recognized expert in trade issues, is co-chair of the TTCA, which is expected to present a report to Governor Brewer this fall with recommendations on how to advance Arizona’s trade relationships.

“Arizona has geographic advantages being positioned closely to Mexico, California, Texas and Canada. We are surrounded by big economies,” Kolbe said. “We have longtime ties to Mexico, we have tourism and land ownership, and we have a good business climate that is conducive to investment. But there are challenges ahead. The new Panama Canal expansion is going to change the trade paths in the United States and could bypass Arizona. Our state lacks good border infrastructure. But the biggest problem is the lack of a united front by political and commerce leaders to unify this state when it comes to trade and transportation improvements.”

For more information about the AMC, visit www.azmc.org or visit www.azttca.org for information about the Transportation and Trade Corridor Alliance.

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The Arizona-Mexico Commission (AMC) is connecting communities and changing business in the Arizona-Sonora region. We are the bridge between cross-border entities of common interest in the governmental, business and academic communities. For media information, or more information about the Arizona-Mexico Commission, please contact Chris Stoller, Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives, at (602) 542-1287, or by e-mail at cstoller@az.gov. Visit the AMC online at www.azmc.org.